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ABSTRACT

This study examined the components of a leadership training program for principals and assistant principals designed to help them promote success for all children, particularly low-performing and diverse students. Qualitative research methods were used to examine the first year of the 2-year Coaching Principals Program. The program, rooted in cognitive science, supported administrators as they dealt with dramatic demographic changes resulting in ever increasing numbers of children who do not succeed in school. It provided large-group, 1-day sessions; individualized coaching at each administrator's site; and a 2-day leadership conference that focused on cognitive coaching. Observational, interview, document, and artifact data were collected throughout the year. Results showed how principals and assistant principals professionalized as they learned to lead diverse schools through coaching. The impact of coaching differed among principals, depending in part on the needs of their schools. (SM)

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Professionalizing Principals: Leading Diverse Schools

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Professionalizing Principals: Leading Diverse Schools

Several school reforms, standardized testing, school accountability, and high stakes exit examinations are changing the expectations and work for school administrators. These changes are most critical in low performing schools and school districts with increasing enrollments of diverse students. Administrators responsible for these types of schools are seeking and receiving help from many sources.

The case which is reported here is based on a group of assistant principals and principals who are receiving special leadership training from a team composed of university, county office. and school district associates (UCDA). The training is specifically targeted to help administrators promote success for all children which in practical terms means low performing and diverse. The research question is: How do leadership training programs assist school administrators to lead diverse schools? The associated questions are: What are the components of the particular leadership training program under investigation? How does this training contribute to the professionalization of principals?

Method

Qualitative research methods were used to examine the first year of the two-year Coaching Principals Program directed by the UCDA team. Observational, interview, document and artifact data were collected throughout the year. Long and intensive observations of large group sessions and individualized coaching sessions were conducted. For example, the research assistant and I began our observations with the second of five large group sessions and subsequently attended the remaining three large-group sessions and a two-day long conference.

While attending we collected documents and artifacts and wrote field notes of our observations. Out of 26 individualized coaching sessions, we attended 23 held in schools throughout the county. The individualized coaching meetings were held at the assistant principals' and principals' school sites and each coaching meeting was approximately an hour long. Each observation was carefully documented in field notes and later typed for review and analysis.

Different types of documents and artifacts were collected and analyzed. For example, program literature, coaching schedules and summaries, campus reports of various sorts, and electronic communication were compiled and examined.

Formal and informal interviews were conducted. Team members, consultants, administrative staff and some of the principals were formally and/or informally interviewed.

Organizing Concepts

By applying a sociocultural approach, school administrators' work or leadership can be viewed as embedded in an environment with cultural, historical and institutional roots. By conceiving administrators' work or leadership practice (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001) occurring on a social plane as they interact with others and each other in a social context and on a psychological plane when reflecting about themselves and their interactions with others (Wertsch, 1999), we can begin to explain how administrators leadership in diverse schools differs from leadership in homogeneous schools. Since school administrators' work is mediated by technical and psychological tools leadership training tends to consist of technical skills and psychological theories. Technical tools, in this case, are the concrete objects necessary for people to do tasks (Perkins, 1995; Pea, 1993; Spillane, et al., 2001). For instance, in schools principals enact their roles based on rules and regulations such as division of labor, lesson plans,

test scores, and program evaluations. Principals use psychological tools such as language, different forms of communication, and other means that require introspection.

By applying the cognitive science approach, human activity or leadership practice is applied to its natural setting where individual cognition is not only a function of individual mental capacity, but is also an instrument for making sense of the world situation-by-situation. A link is thus established between the individual and the environment with human activity distributed across a web of actors, artifacts, and situations (Spillane, et al., 2001). School administrators' work is then conceived as relationships with others through a variety of technical and psychological means as situations are dealt with on a moment-to-moment basis.

Coaching rooted in cognitive science, as applied in the Coaching Program is designed to help school administrators relate, communicate, and work with and through others. Witherspoon (2000) defines executive coaching as "an action-learning process to enhance effective action and learning agility. It involves a professional relationship and a deliberate, personalized process to provide an executive with valid information, free and informed choices based on that information, and internal commitment to those choices" (p. 167). Coaching is the means by which interaction and sharing perspectives take place in order to establish trust and build collegial relationships between organizational actors. For principals this means there is a continuous learning process that includes information about the changes in their schools and the choices or decisions before them, and the types of commitments necessary for those choices or decisions. Regarding their schools the overriding concern is promoting success for all children by distributing their leadership across the organization and beyond to their communities.

Promoting success for all children means addressing the issues of diversity within the principals' schools. The cultural proficiency model (Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 1999) asserts that in a culturally proficient environment, individual and group differences are acknowledged and affirmed by everyone. Everyone knows they are valued and everyone in the school community is encouraged to participate in facilitating awareness of difference and diversity. In addition to promoting inclusive attitudes and practices amongst everyone, a culturally proficient school establishes processes which facilitate learning about diversity and develops response strategies in order to deal with issues based on individual and group differences.

The concept of cultural proficiency is being applied to explain (1) the type of learning that is necessary, (2) the process by which the learning takes place, (3) the way the content and form of learning is applied to work with low performing classrooms, and (4) the institutional changes that begin to occur.

The connection between coaching and cultural proficiency is shown in several ways. First, the processes required for effective coaching calls for intense interacting and relating. When that interaction is directed to those who are different and relationships are built between the parties, cultural proficiency is potentially being acquired by both parties. Second, as relationships are established trust and networks are developed so that principals and assistant principals can use their authority to acquire necessary resources as well as hold teachers and students responsible for fulfilling their obligations. But most importantly the interactions and relationships are based on the mutual interest of contributing to the success of all children. As the value of the goal increases, the interaction, relationship, and personal as well as collective attitudes are directed positively to each other and to those who are different. Continued

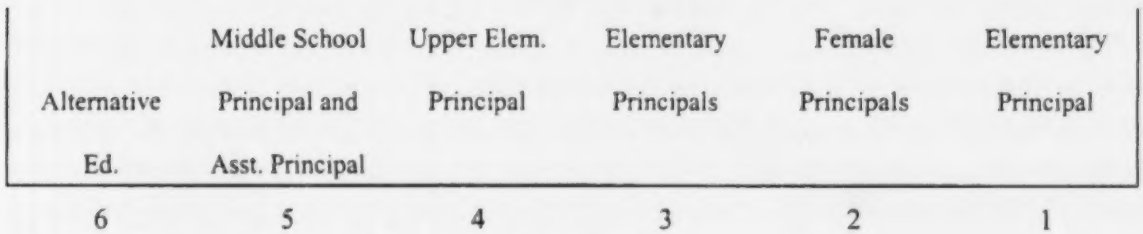
interaction, relationships, and children's success leads to further understanding and cooperation between those involved (Pea, 1993; Perkins, 1993; Spillane, et al., 2001; Wertsch, 1991). Because cultural proficiency is a social process between individuals, it is assumed that as individuals learn to interact in a diverse context, they will have an effect of affirming and advocating cultural proficiency while they also learn more about themselves.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Schools

The principals and assistant principals in the Coaching Program work in culturally diverse schools with different degrees of need. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1



In the alternative education schools, the administrators are expected to succeed with marginalized and at-risk students through a rigorous K-12 process and meet the same academic standards as their counterparts in traditional schools. With the superintendent's support, the alternative education administrators' concerns center on articulating teaching and learning strategies and goals to improve their students' performance.

The two middle schools' principals in the program are located in the same district. The Latina principal of one year heads the school where 90% of the students are of Mexican descent. Her appointment included the mandate from the superintendent to restore order, build

organizational capacity, raise test scores, and improve the physical environment of the school. A white female assistant principal represented the second school consisting of white and Latino students. The new baccalaureate high school's recruitment of the best administrators, teachers and students is leaving the middle school with low performing members throughout its structure.

The remaining six principals head elementary schools that differ in the degree to which their communities have changed from rural to bedroom communities for the surrounding high tech cities. The schools' major demographic changes and the increasing number of children of color are affecting the quality of work in the schools and the quality of life in the community.

The Coaching Program

The Coaching Program is designed to support school administrators as they deal with dramatic demographic changes resulting in ever increasing numbers of children who are not succeeding in school. The Program provides support in three major ways: (1) large-group one-day sessions, (2) individualized coaching at each administrator's site, and (3) a two-day leadership conference focusing on cognitive coaching.

The form and content of the support is based on coaching, a method rooted in cognitive science. The major assumption is that behavior, attitude, and knowledge are generated in a social, historical, and environmental context. (See Spillane, et al., 2001). For school administrators to improve their leadership capacity, bring about school improvement, and understand and relate to their changing student body and community, forms and content of communication are deemed important. Interaction, activities, and experiences take place in a social context and environment as close to the school administrator's work as possible.

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The goal of the Coaching Program, as stated in its invitational brochure is, "Participants will engage others in creating an environment in which powerful learning is experienced by all learners, systematically and consistently" (Coaching Brochure, n.d.). In order to fulfill the goal stated above, the greater part of the Coaching Program consisted of interaction between the school administrators and the director and consultant, between the administrators, and between the administrators and those involved in the cognitive coaching conference.

In order to better understand how principals' and assistant principals' learning process took place, observational data is presented from the cognitive conference first because it most clearly displays both form and content consistent with the coaching process. It focuses on interaction, on types of communication patterns, and demonstrates "the action-learning process" (Witherspoon, 2000).

The Coaching Conference

In 2000-2001, The Coaching Program added a coaching component in a 2-day conference sponsored by the UCDA. The participants at this conference included two county superintendents, the dean and associate dean of the university's school of education, and two consultants. The conference was held at the university. One of the county superintendents stated the purpose of the conference, "This program will train participants to deal with the future. It will train participants to respect, to listen, and...What this program boils down to is teaching one another to teach children." The associate dean elaborated, "The purpose of this program is to train educational leaders to be coaches to the next generation of educational administrators. This is the charter class."

The form of the conference displayed a process which included much interaction, exercises, introspection, and acknowledgments of each other and their attributes. The following is an abbreviated form of the observations of this conference that best illustrate how form and content highlight the action-learning process of this program.

> 8:46 a.m. The associate dean gives the opening and welcoming statement and introduces the dean who states his commitment to the public K-12 schools. He relays a message from the university president and introduces the county superintendent who reaffirms commitment to public education and to its improvement. The associate dean introduces the consultant who is the "co-developer of the cognitive coaching model and he prepares and coaches leaders to influence other educational leaders."
> The consultant directs the group to, "Say hello to your neighbor and tell one person at the table what you hope to gain today." The group engages in the activity.

An interpretation of this activity is that the simplest form of communication and attempt to influence is to: (1) greet one another (2) converse about the immediate context and the issue that is common between the two individuals, and (3) set the stage for considerations of history (past) and expectations (future). This example displays form and content in its simplest structure. The consultant lets participants know they may rise from their chairs, stretch, get food and drinks and go to the restrooms ensuring both individual and personal needs were attended. The field notes indicate

> The consultant explains that meetings and classroom instructions will be emphasized throughout the two days. The agenda is presented.
> Welcome
> Self-directedness, including self-management, self-monitoring, and self-modifying.
> Cognitive coaching defined
> Metaphors will be identified that explain identity of participants and others.
> Exploration of things that make us feel good and affect the brain; a method to develop trust and rapport with others.
> Mediation - the person between two people.

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Coaching- the on-going relationship focusing on those taking action toward realization of goals and maximizing performance.
An emphasis on self.

An activity called for participants to respond to the questions: Who helped you become self-managed, self-monitored and self-modifying? and When intentions were good, what person did not help you produce the three points? Out of this exercise, the responses were not who and what person, but rather how. For example, the responses to Who helped you? question elicited, "They provided challenges, listened." The consultant closed the activity with a break.

9:58 a.m. Break

The above shows monologues were kept short, provided people an opportunity to interact and questions did not necessarily elicit direct responses. Instead, they lead the discussion in a different direction and/or topic.

10:15 a.m. An exercise is posed to the group which calls for conversation moving from impersonal (a summer program) to personal demonstrating how trust is built. The consultant explained how rapport is established through moments and trust is built through patterns in those moments.

12:41 p.m. The luncheon speaker, a county superintendent reinforces the purpose of The Coaching Program.

1:00 p.m. Afternoon session opens with a review of morning sessions. The consultant's textbook is used to direct the activities for the afternoon. The attempt is to cover the states of mind: efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence. These states of mind are achieved through interaction that includes listening, paraphrasing, acknowledging, summarizing and shifting focus.

The second day included a polling of the sort of evening the participants had, a review of the previous day's experiences and homework. Aside from large-group responses, the participants also engaged in writing. The format continued with large-group exchanges, break-up into small groups, exercises consisting of

conversations and reviews of characteristics required to communicate effectively, influence, and obtain cooperation.

At the close of the activity part of the conference an evaluation form was distributed to the participants to complete. The intent was to determine what had been useful, learned, and what would be desired by the administrators in the future. Multiple choice questions regarding outcomes, goals, educational topics and desired areas of educational leadership were presented. Most respondents reported the most useful parts of the conference were: peer interaction, networking, coaching, communication skills, and strategies useful to improved teaching and staff development.

For future workshops, the respondents asked for more practice in coaching. The educational topics most important to school administrators at this time of their careers were training staff in communication skills, developing resiliency, and educational reform.

The day ended with a ceremonial dinner for those who participated in the conference.

To summarize, the major contribution of the conference, was to give the participants an opportunity to interact with each other, expand their networks of contacts, and engage in a variety of communication forums, such as purposive conversation, rapport and trust establishment, and identity formation. The conference, by its nature, was not a realistic context in which school administrators practice but it was a place to begin professional relationships and personalized processes.

Large-Group Sessions

Form and Content of Coaching

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Five large-group sessions were held throughout the year. Most of the participants attended all of them. The two Latino administrators only attended the second session. Most of the participants were able to arrive to the sessions early where a continental breakfast was served. A few of the attendees traveled fifty and more miles to the county office, making it difficult for them to arrive much before the session began. Those few minutes were, however, important in that people were able to interact with each other, share information, and grow accustomed to the environment of the session. Cellular phones were common and administrators frequently stepped out of the room to answer their calls.

The large-group sessions were usually opened by the director. Introductions were exchanged and the purpose of the session was explained. The consultant, in turn, passed out the reading materials for the day and explained what was to take place or posed a general question to begin discussion. The consultant maintained a professional demeanor throughout the year. His dress, voice, and attentiveness showed seriousness, concern and competence in directing the activities. The field notes of the second session illustrate the consistency between form and content to the coaching process.

> 8:45 a.m. the consultant explains the content of the reading materials and reminds everyone about the data they were to bring to the second session. He says, "Domain means good student data. What are your initial thoughts about your leadership? Action is the third section." Participants take a few moments to leaf through the reader. Page ix of the notebook states the intent of The Coaching Program Seminar II is "to enable participants to undertake the preliminary work of analyzing organizational assumptions and behavior patterns."
>
> 8:58 a.m. Participants are asked to get up and find some partner from another table. The director clarifies what the assignment is for today, "Today you will collect student data to determine trends and patterns. Most of the data is interview data akin to survey questions. The data being examined today is student data." The group is allowed a few minutes to pull out their data.

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9:08 a.m. the consultant takes over. "Taking a good look at student data. The key word is all. Diversity and demographics are the big issues in how we approach all. Texas uses No excuses. What are our beliefs? What is the culture? How do we deepen our understanding? We triangulate data: (1) good student data, (2) teacher/student interaction, (3) develop a question, (4) look at quantitative data, and (5) formulate a definition of a good student. The good student can be conceived from questions such as, What do we value in students? What do we believe about learning? About students? What do we assume about students' learning? How do we make sense of data?"

After a few comments, questions, and clarifications, the consultant elaborates, "We are using the constructivist approach. It is purposive and intentional. How do we focus? What do we have control over?" Charts are used to lay out the suggestions and questions. Discussion ensues. The consultant uses the metaphor of the optometrist. He explained, "As you sit in the optometrist chair, the doctor continually flips different lenses in order to get the clearer vision. After a process of looking through several lenses and picking the clearest pair of lenses, you are now able to see clearly."

Most of the participants had data with them. Charts get posted around the room to process the data. Some analysis focused on the question, What is a good student? Descriptions such as good students write and read are written in the charts. The group continues with analysis, primarily by answering questions such as, What are good teachers? What do we learn about the culture of school? The groups were better able to cluster teachers and students and provide descriptors of good students and teachers, but less able in questions related to school culture, class culture, and develop better students.

The class continued with the analysis and discussion throughout the morning. Lunch followed.

1:11 p.m. the consultant asks the participants to revisit their reader. He asks the question, "What is powerful learning?" The class reads from the reader. The participants are divided into 3 groups where they are assigned to create a set of criteria to assess powerful learning in the classroom. Two groups wrote their sets on charts in front of the room. The consultant interrupts activity to show a film.

2:10 p.m. The film, "Good Morning, Miss Toliver," is shown to an attentive audience.

2:30 p.m. The participants return to the activity. Some discussion about the film takes place. The class tries to complete and review the charts for each other.

2:48 p.m. Everyone works on the reader and evaluations.
3:00 p.m. End of the session.

The second session's observations are presented here because this session is the most illustrative of the quality of sessions. First, the session contained within it the form that is consistent with coaching. Demarcations between openings, transitions, and closings were definite. The class experienced both large-group exchanges (public and macro interaction) and small-group discussions (personal and micro). The officials responsible for the session were present, available for assistance, and maintained order, rhythm, and focus. Second, the content was obvious. The program is designed to support school administrators make data-driven decisions. The reader provided general information. The assignment to collect student data called for sets of data, the exercises called for analysis of data, and the film was an attempt to integrate the notions of student data and culture building.

Examining the form and content of this session shows the successful execution of the coaching process, as well as some flaws. For example, the opportunities to fully consider historical, social and other environmental aspects could not be provided in a day's session away from the work sites of the school administrators. Also, the details of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on-site data were difficult to acquire in day-long sessions. Nonetheless, participants grappled with data and probably appreciated the complexity of data-driven decision-making.

Cultural Proficiency

The other large-group session presented here dealt with the content of cultural proficiency. At 8:59 a.m., the consultant introduced the cultural proficiency model. He said, "This model comes out of mental health. This book (he shows the text, Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School

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Leaders, 1999, authored by Randall B. Lindsey, Kikanza Nuri Robins, and Raymond D. Terrell) is the first work of this kind to be used with schools. School leaders are the target group for this book." He turns on the video, "Getting Along," accompanied by Dvorak's, New World Symphony. People write out reactions to the video while the consultant and director write up the cultural proficiency continuum on charts. The continuum is as follows:

Cultural destructiveness Cultural blindness Cultural competence

Cultural incapacity Cultural precompetence Cultural proficiency

The administrators discussed the concepts on the continuum and offered descriptions and explanations about movement through the continuum. They tried to place their comments somewhere on the continuum. Some of these comments were: "There is an absence of males in the families"; "I walk into classrooms and I do not see color"; "Our demographics have changed and our school is going down hill"; "He does not have much of a home to live in; his parents have checked out; If you think she is a mess, then you should see her parents; and Our students cannot learn this; and the test scores are low because English language learners cannot learn." Some emotional exchanges took place between the participants.

> The director elaborated, "These issues [diversity] are like an onion. We keep peeling skin away. There is so much unseen in racism. This has always been an emotional context. My race is my diversity, my Hispanic ancestry. ...We think about what we hear or see, what we do not see nor hear. So many layers of this onion. I have been apprehensive about talking about my Hispanic heritage, a filter that I lead my life by or denial of the presence of these filters. We are not evil, but there are invisible qualities that are excluding and obstructing the beautiful quality that children come with. ...I ask myself, Why those unseen filters that filter out our joy and optimism from the first day of school?"

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The group emphasized how professional identity serves to filter or hide racial or ethnic identity. After considerable discussion, the session closed with the characteristics of cultural proficiency. They are: diversity is valued, culture is assessed, dynamics of differences are managed. cultural knowledge is institutionalized, and there is adaptation to diversity.

The session presented above included reading articles and viewing the video, "Words to Lead by: Looking for Leadership." The form and content of the coaching process were adhered to; the difference between this session and the others was its emotional tone. Acceptance, understanding. respect, and empathy, however, were maintained throughout. This session was also the most engaging for the participants for two reasons: (1) the session provided a legitimate forum for personalizing attitudes, values and dilemmas and (2) skill, competence, and proficiency were terms used to address the volatile issue of diversity. It could be concluded that cultural proficiency could be acquired.

Individualized School Site Sessions

Except for one school administrator, we were able to attend two or three sessions for the 8 principals, 2 assistant principals, and alternative education. The sessions begin with the consultant conversing and asking a series of questions regarding each administrator's goals for their schools and themselves. The format and content of the individualized school site sessions followed the coaching process. For example, the consultant opened the session with greetings and amenities. This was followed by asking a question such as, "What is it you want to service your school and you?" He allowed the respondent to speak as long as they wished. The information about the school and biographical accounts began the conversations. Questions posed by the consultant from a prepared list of questions followed. The information sought included: major goal(s), success indicators for

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the goal, plan for collecting evidence, approaches and strategies, decisions and their monitoring and the learning focus and process for self-assessment.

The second session called for a summary of the previous session, recall of supporting information, comparison, analysis, and inference to determine cause and effect relationships, and focus for the next session. The third session dealt with the first session's information as a follow-up and assessment of improvement.

Leadership Practice in Diverse Schools

As stated previously, schools differed in the degree of need requiring different leadership practices of school administration. The alternative education administrators spoke about their need to prepare students to pass the standardized examinations as all others. Reorganization, gaining county support, achieving legitimacy among their peers, and staff development for their faculty and staff were required to accomplish this objective. The middle school principal and assistant principal voiced needs to a higher degree than did the elementary principals. For example, the principal's physical plant and grounds required improvement and maintenance. Scheduling, staff development, personnel assignments, parent involvement, and student performance were serious issues to be addressed. The assistant principal's needs centered on the changing quality of the school due to the recruitment of students and faculty to the new baccalaureate high school. Scheduling, staff development, faculty assignments, space and resource allocation, and student performance were uppermost in her mind.

Five of the elementary schools' principals viewed high student performance jeopardized by the changing demographics. This was especially true for two of the elementary schools' principals. Staff development and parent involvement were associated needs. Finally, one of the principals was

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more concerned about his own personal readiness to assume the principalship in a different school. Excerpts from sessions with representations of each of these groups are presented below.

Alternative Education

The alternative education administrators functioned as one group. Because their concerns were the same for each of the members, their sessions were held at the county office and included all of them. They focused on ways to prepare students for placement in the regular schools and classes. One of the alternative education administrators says, "The district is really concerned about how we will prepare and place students. ...The goal is to place students back into regular education, but the regular schools do not want them. This is a major issue." The consultant summarized in his notes, "Currently, you are grappling with the role of alternative education in light of accountability, standards, and the high school exit examination. You are mindful of the academic and social needs of students, the need for internal support [from the county], and the need to educate feeder schools and judges on the role of alternative education in school reform." By the second session, alternative education decided to prepare a statement for 8th grade promotion standards. This statement was formulated and drafted by the third session. It is now on its way for approval by the county office.

Middle School Principal

In a session of almost three hours long, the middle school principal laid out a long list of improvements that were necessary and made some plans about carrying them out. She explained, "The teachers wanted a new administration to come to fix the school. You cannot fix; all you can do is work toward it. ...We take baby steps, baby steps." Following the coaching model for each question posed, the consultant listened and waited until the principal was ready to go on to the next. He summarized, "The goal is to work with faculty colleagues to establish a vision for the middle

school that focuses on students' academic and social achievement. The vision is to value the diversity of the community, to provide educator professional development, and to foster administrator-teacher collaboration."

The middle school assistant principal faced a series of issues not uncommon among schools whose communities are growing and require new schools. In this case, a high proportion of students and staff were leaving to the new school ensuring that the higher SES students and better teachers will be housed at the new school. The changes will affect the type and size of the student population; The middle school will have a much smaller student body, but additional facility space.

The assistant principal's work was complicated because the principal has relied on his good teachers for many years. The curriculum is traditional and although there is a growing proportion of Latino students, Spanish courses are not offered. There is an absence of student discipline regulations. When the consultant asked her, "What are the challenges for the next five years?" she responded, "It depends. Those who stay at the site are ingrained. They are not willing to go to meet the standards, ...[change] the curriculum or engage in curriculum development, or focus on more staff communication. It's not a very popular way to do things. For example, they do not know what a master calendar looks like. ...The third thing is the discipline of the students."

By the third coaching session, the consultant summarized some of the changes that took place and presented what remained to be improved. He wrote in his summary statement, "The goal you identified is to develop with teachers a curriculum that is responsive to the reading needs of students at your school. The corrective reading program has been adopted due to deficiencies identified in test scores. To make this goal effective, you want to be able to work with the principal to do advance planning, thereby taking pressure off of you. ...The master schedule process is [to begin] in January

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for the following academic year. ...The secretarial staff reorganization will be completed during this summer. There will be advance planning for the fall in terms of predicting/planning for the anticipated number of students. There will be an involvement with grant writing."

These cases illustrate how the coaching process took place at the school site. The principal presented the list of school site needs, discussed the needs, reflected over the needs, and was left to work on meeting the needs. The consultant followed up with a summary report of the session.

Upper Elementary School

One of the schools houses children in grades 4, 5, and 6. This example illustrates how this principal views his responsibility to his school, students, and community. He described his school.

> Aside from the high school, we are the largest school [in this district]; it was a big, elementary school. Elementary schools have about 600 students, so my 920 student campus is a large one. Our growth is projected to be about 3-5%. Right now we are at capacity, expected to reach 1020, when we will have to reconfigure. This is the oldest campus. We were the first to go through modernization. We are well technologically wired. We are fairly modern on the inside. We do not have a multi-purpose room yet. We have four lunches. We are also on a 60/20 four track year. Our low track is probably B. A and D are at the top. A and B are mostly Latino. We are skewed because of ethnicity. When tracking was established all communication was in English. Spanish-speaking parents were not aware. All siblings are on the same track. We have between 57-60% Latino and 20% ELL. Most are of Mexican descent, a lot from Michoacan, Matzatlan, and from the deeper provinces, 30-37% are white and the rest is mixed. Blacks are increasing and we have some from the local reservation. We also have a few Pacific Islanders, Arabic, and Chinese students. Sixty-eight percent of the students are in reduced lunch and Title I.
>
> He continued, "We have opportunities and challenges in this school. One is that we have 41-50% of our teachers in emergency credentials. Some are experienced in other states, but not here. We also have a relatively new staff. Four or five are tenured."
>
> The consultant summarized the content of the first coaching session. He wrote, "You identified two goals to guide your work: to develop a cohesive faculty that is knowledgeable and respectful of the community and to become more proficient and comfortable in your role as instructional supervisor and teacher evaluator." By the

> third coaching session the consultant reported, "You identified one goal with which you want to work at this time. To develop your coaching approach and skills when giving formative feedback to teachers, to focus on guidance and directness, as needed. The common denominator, for you, is to have feedback grounded in what affects student learning. Guidance occurs when assisting teachers in making good choices in instruction and curriculum and directness occurs when teachers are either resisting or otherwise not making choices that result in good decisions in instruction and curriculum."

This case represents the principal's leadership by planning to apply the coaching process to help teachers. The improvement of teachers' instruction is expected to lead to improved student performance.

Elementary Principals

Five elementary principals' needs focused on meeting the accountability requirements, that is, improving the standardized test scores. Their schools are rapidly changing where the majority of the students are low SES, non-English speaking, and children of color. For example, the Latino principal described his school in this way. "I accepted this position because of the challenge. It has the lowest achievement, 60% Hispanic, 20% Caucasian, and the rest primarily Cambodian. ...I saw an opportunity to work with a struggling program. ...We are developing. We grew almost 70 points in our standardized tests. ...We have a very needy socio-economic group here, 90% is Title I level. ...We averaged high growth, all groups met targets and exceeded some. This year I want to be more data-driven."

Writing to the same principal, the consultant summarized the second coaching session. "In this session you reflected on the academic year, the busyness and the accomplishments. You focused on teacher collaboration and general sense of accomplishment, being acknowledged by teachers.

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...The major learning is the need to devise a professional development program ...develop criteria that will serve as [its] basis."

The consultant summarized the coaching session with another principal with a similar school and need. "You identified a goal and subgoals interrelated in intricate ways. ...To work with colleagues to develop a unified culture within the district. ...To solidify a curriculum...to increase the use of English language development instruction, and to create a community of valuing the K-8 experience that is unique to the community."

By the third session, the consultant summarized the progress. He wrote, "You identified one goal to guide your work that continues your efforts at building collaboration in the school in support of the 5-year plan. The near term is to develop more collaborative approaches to issues that face the community's educators. This goal is built on the success you experienced in having the leadership committee and the entire faculty, in turn, review the budget and engage in conversation about priorities for school year."

Two Elementary White Female Principals

The two elementary white female principals headed schools that were stable and pleasant in spite of an increasing proportion of Hispanic and low SES students. One of them was in the process of moving to a high SES school. She described her school, "It is impacted and I am kicking students out because the school is overcrowded and the families live outside the area. Forty-five percent Hispanic and 60-75% are on free or reduced lunches. I also have Oriental students. This school has a student body of 930 students encompassing K-6 grades. It is difficult to keep an accurate count of the population because the transience rate is so high. The campus is a closed one."

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The consultant wrote in the summary the following, "You identified one near-term goal. Your goal is to close out the major activities at [the school]. Given your impending new assignment, you want to provide a smooth transition for your successor and give yourself time to begin focusing on the new assignment."

The field notes show that the other school is one where "the campus is very clean. ...Not one piece of garbage on the ground. There is no graffiti and the buildings are all very clean and well painted." The principal's goal is to "look at teacher plans and see strategies to meet every child's need. She wants to see the lessons and see if action plans are geared to meet the needs of the students. ...She does not expect the same progress for all teachers, but she wants to see progress across the board." The consultant summarized her goals this way, "There are two goals. The first goal is to develop a mechanism by which to have teachers at the grade-level articulation meeting focus on the analysis of student work in order to inform team planning and individual practice. The second goal is to involve teachers in decision -making so that they can experience the school plan as being theirs."

These two principals' leadership was aimed at improving students' performance by focusing on the teachers.

One of the principals' assignment was in a school where performance and SES were high. His primary goal was to improve his personal skills. His career reflects a continuing advancement to be acknowledged as the Principal of the Year and appointed to this school which was ranked as the highest in the district with a student population of 11,080. The school opened in 1989 with 750 students. The school's standardized test scores were very high. The principal referred to the school as the "Nordstrom of public schools." During this period, he was preparing to move to the school

headed by one of the white female principals. The consultant summarized the first coaching session. "You identified one near-term goal. Your goal is to plan for your transition to [another elementary school]. You feel confident that [the school] you are leaving is well organized for your successor and that you want to focus on making a good impression through clear statements about your values and expectations." The second coaching session is summarized by the consultant, "You identified goals for your transition to [a different school]. You plan to develop an administrative leadership team comprised of the new assistant principal, the Title I program manager, and a key teacher to work with you. Your second goal is to work with the administrative leadership team and the school leadership team to analyze student achievement data to determine strengths and areas of concern at the school. Your planned outcomes are to identify and remove barriers to student achievement."

This case is important for two reasons. First, it reveals a relationship between principal and school context and second, it shows how The We Will Succeed Program contributes to personal development.

Conclusions

How do principals and assistant principals learn to lead diverse schools? This study shows how principals and assistant principals professionalize as they learn to lead diverse schools through coaching. UCDA sponsor and direct the Coaching Program with the assistance of two consultants. one who is deeply involved in large-group sessions and individualized coaching and one who presented coaching processes at a conference. The theoretical grounding for the Coaching Program is rooted in cognitive science. The fundamental assumptions are that individuals' actions, such as in schools, are embedded in a historical, social, and cultural context. Thus, if one seeks to improve leadership practice among principals, the first consideration is the schools' and classrooms' context.

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This consideration is lodged in two aspects of learning and change. Principals need to be knowledgeable about their context. That is, they should have some sort of data base regarding the context in which they work. Second, principals need to be able to work successfully within this context. There is a necessity for them to become embedded in the context in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the work context and their competence to be part of the context, in this case, part of the school organization and their community.

This requires that the Program contain within it the content that answers the following questions: How do you know what data to obtain? How do you obtain information? How do you analyze the data and what do you do with the data? The Program must also contain within it content regarding the changes that are necessary in order to succeed in a diverse context. The changes affect attitudes, skills, and knowledge. These changes lead to changes in interaction patterns, actions, and sentiments. In order to accomplish these objectives, the program must consist of a balance between form and content. Principals in learning about their context need a form in which this information is acquired, analyzed and dealt with. The content is comprehensive and complex.

The Program provided support in three major ways: the large-group session, the conference, and individualized coaching. The presentation of the content and form was quite faithful to the cognitive coaching process. The coaching form or process consisted of brief and purposeful introductions, a series of large-group sharing of information, small-group discussion and/or activity, and personalized interaction, such as partnering, teaming, and one-on-one conversations. The tone was calm, informal, and paced at a comfortable rhythm.

The content for the first year focused on principals' school needs. One of the first exercises was for principals to gather data regarding their schools and community. Principals collected data,

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attempted to analyze it, and were willing to share and discuss it but were puzzled about certain aspects of this exercise. First, they were not sure about their selection of the data to gather (sampling), they were not sure about the method for recording it (field notes), and they were uncertain about how to go about making sense of it. Some described, some tried to categorize and list, some inferred, and still others used the data to generate narratives related to some aspect of the data. Finally, determining whether data reflected a problem to be solved and what that solution might be led to lively discussions, but probably not much direction towards decision-making or leading. What is the leadership practice associated with this information? type of discussion might be helpful.

The session dealing with cultural proficiency was an engaging one. Discussions and exchanges of information as well as the associated readings provoked important ideas. The limitation was that it was not explicitly linked to the coaching process. The large-group session might not facilitate this, but we believe it is important to integrate the cognitive coaching process with cultural proficiency in order to affect the leadership practice of principals.

The coaching process assumes that new insights and new thinking are generated from intense, wide-ranging, and sustained interactive relationships. By intense we mean that interaction or sharing of information and ideas may require questioning, probing, challenging, and possibly playing devil's advocate. By wide-ranging we mean that sharing and interaction patterns should span a wide area. For principals, that means they should be connected to other principals, to other school administrators, to other educators, and to community groups and individuals. The Coaching Program can probably facilitate this through large-group sessions, but also by mediating regional activities where these principals attend and participate. By sustained we mean that leadership practice is a

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continuing requirement of principals in their work. This means that interaction and connections between the principal and the school and community members and others must be on-going. Opportunities for these connections to continue need to exist in order for principals to retain and renew their knowledge and interactions within their school's context. The Program can mediate in the creation, legitimation, and support of such connections.

Leadership practice is a visible and tangible process in the daily work of principals. We believe that in order to link The Program to principal effectiveness, principals need to be observed in their work. In order for coaching to be effective, it must take place in the context where it is needed. This report's greatest limitation is that we have no data regarding principals' actions in their work.

What was the relationship between the coach and the principals' group? The coach and the principals were involved in a professional relationship and deliberate personalized process. The individualized coaching provided variety in formality and informality. The coach and principals were friendly with each other and liked each other. The easy manner and soft voice of the consultant called for a relaxed response. The principals received quick responses and attention from him.

The impact of coaching is differentiated among the principals. One reason is because the principals' schools have different degrees of need. A second reason is that not all principals attended all sessions. Two principals only attended the second large-group session. A third reason is that the content of the individualized coaching sessions consisted of prepared questions and responses without much challenge. There was some probing, but I believe that it might not have been sufficient to call for new insights and new thinking. Data showing principals in action was not collected, thus I can not report if and how principals' on-site actions were impacted.

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There is, however, data showing what these administrators' goals desires are to improve their schools. A list of these goals and desires for each principal is included in the report. (See Appendix A). Fulfilling these goals and desires would be one way to link the effects of The Coaching Program to leadership practice and school improvement.

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Appendix A

Alternative education

- Draft 8th grade promotion standards.
- Attend the spring conference.
- Attend the staff development seminar this summer.
- Attend the 5-day training program this summer.
- Change relationship between alternative education and the county office.
- Establish cognitive coaching relationships with teachers.

Principal's middle school

- Implement a program on classroom management.
- Implement proposed programs this academic year.
- Make personnel changes for the academic year.
- Make technological changes at the school.
- Monitor student test results with proposed goals.
- Keep a journal of daily events and personal refflections.
- Establish a principal advisory committee.
- Align standards with the benchmarks.
- Determine how teachers spent award moneys.

Assistant Principal's middle school

- Have a summer planning meeting to develop a master schedule.
- Work as a principal in summer school.
- Secure funding for a reading program.
- Change scheduling in academic year.
- Develop a discipline handbook.
- Create a discipline team.
- Determine the status of the custodial staff projects.
- Develop major duties for the principal to review and approve.

Principal's upper elementary school

- Implement a summer training program for students.
- Develop a 5-year plan.
- Plan professional development workshops for the year.
- Acquire a state grant.

Principals' elementary schools

- Purchase computers for the year.
- Make personnel changes.
- Reduce amount of communication over the loudspeaker.
- Acquire grants for staff development.
- Establish a reading program.

Develop a schematic plan and calendar for staff development.
Coach teacher to do standardized tests analyses.
Keep a journal of day-to-day activities.
Attend the reading conference.
Extend the day for kindergarten teachers.
Develop a modernization plan and literacy program.
Acquire modernization funds.
Implement a detention program.
Establish school leadership teams.
Establish a character education program.
Develop a school plan.
Meet with individual faculty members regularly for short sessions.
Hire a program director for the Title I Program.
Establish a staff meeting schedule.
Analyze student data at the new school.
Meet with grade-level teachers regularly.

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